



## **AZ. Auto Theft Authority News & Updates December 2009**

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**The AATA Staff and Board of Directors wish you all a safe and blessed 2009 Holiday Season!**

### **AATA Youth Volunteer Corp to Host Holiday VIN Etching Clinic - Dec. 22nd.**

AATA Staff along with our Youth Volunteer Corp will be hosting a Free VIN Etching Clinic on Tuesday, Dec. 22nd at the AATA Office Building parking lot - 1400 W. Washington Street, Phoenix, AZ. If you're interested in reserving a space, please email Ann Armstrong - [ann.armstrong@aata.az.gov](mailto:ann.armstrong@aata.az.gov).

### **Valleywide Bait Cars to Catch Holiday Thieves**

Valley law enforcement agencies are warning would be auto burglars and thieves to beware. Police across the Valley are using bait cars to help fight auto thefts and burglaries this holiday season by placing bait cars at area shopping malls and busy parking lot locations.

Bait cars are an effective program being used across the state; in the past five years, hundreds of car thieves have taken the bait in Arizona. In addition, Arizona's auto theft rate has been declining for the past six years, which officials credit to aggressive, proactive programs like the bait cars. According to Brian R. Salata, AATA Executive Director, "although auto thefts are down, stepping up efforts during the peak holiday season is an effective strategy on the part of law enforcement across the state."

"The bait cars are an excellent program," said Sgt. Brandon Blanco of the Glendale Police Department's Auto Theft Unit. Glendale's auto thefts are down 28% so far this year compared to 2008. Our message is clear - bait cars are out there and are being actively used by officers to catch thieves in the act."

Bait cars are donated by insurance companies, with equipment funded by the Arizona Auto Theft Authority. Bait cars are operated by police agencies and placed in strategic locations. After a bait car is stolen, the location of the vehicle is monitored by police dispatchers through GPS tracking. Cameras and audio tapes are activated when the vehicle is entered; the dispatcher will coordinate a

police response and once officers are in position, the vehicle and thief can be stopped. The criminals are subsequently arrested and prosecuted.

The Arizona Auto Theft Authority wants to remind vehicle owners to take some simple precautions and practice a layered approach to protection. Here are some suggestions to keep you from being a victim this holiday:

#### Layer #1 -- Common Sense

- Lock your car & always take the keys with you. Park in well lit areas.
- Do not leave valuables in plain view - lock merchandise in the trunk. If you do not have a trunk, keep packages covered and out of sight.
- Never leave your vehicle running and unattended.
- If you observe any suspicious persons or activity, immediately report this to parking security or contact the police.
- Do not hide a spare set of keys in the car - the pros know where to look.
- If you have a garage, use it.

#### Layer #2 -- Visible & Audible Warning Devices

The second layer of protection is any device that can be SEEN or HEARD and alerts thieves that your vehicle is protected. Some popular examples include:

- Audible alarms, steering wheel locks, brake locks
- Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) etching on vehicle windows – visit the AATA's website ([www.azwatchyourcar.com](http://www.azwatchyourcar.com) – Events calendar) for a list of upcoming events.

#### Layer #3 – Immobilizers

The third layer of protection is immobilizer devices which prevent thieves from bypassing your ignition and hot-wiring the vehicle. Some popular devices include:

- Kill switches
- Starter, ignition and fuel disablers
- Smart keys
- High security locks & keys
- Fuse cut-offs

#### Layer #4 -- Tracking Devices

The final layer of protection is a tracking device which emits a signal to a police or monitoring station when the vehicle is reported stolen. Tracking devices are very effective in helping authorities recover stolen vehicles.



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